

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SINGAP 04192 240431Z

ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 COME-00 EB-08 TRSE-00 CIAE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 /028 W

-----002223 242238Z /66

R 231216Z SEP 77

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8633

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BEXP, SN

SUBJ: AVON PRODUCTS INC. APPLICATION TO DO BUSINESS IN SINGAPORE

1. EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED CABLE FROM ROBERT R. MCMILLAN, VICE PRESIDENT-PACIFIC, AVON PRODUCTS INC., REQUESTING AMBASSADOR TO APPROACH GOS FINANCE MINISTER HON SUI SEHFIN SUPPORT OF AVON'S APPLICATION TO DO BUSINESS IN SINGAPORE. MCMILLAN STATES THAT FINAL DECISION ON AVON'S APPLICATION RESTS WITH HON AND SUGGESTS THAT APPROACH SHOULD BE MADE BEFORE GOS ISSUES FORMAL REJECTION, WHICH WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO REVERSE.

2. EMBASSY AGREES WITH MCMILLAN'S ASSESSMENT OF STATUS OF AVON'S CASE. WE HAVE BEEN IN CONTACT WITH DEPARTMENT OF TRADE SEVERAL TIMES OVER PAST FEW WEEKS, AND UNDERSTAND THAT DEPARTMENT HAS RECOMMENDED REJECTION TO MINISTER HON. AMBASSADOR HAS SPOKEN AND WRITTEN TO HON PREVIOUSLY ON CASE BUT HAS RECEIVED NO REPLY (HON HAS BEEN PREOCCUPIED WITH ASEAN AND FORTHCOMING FINANCE MINISTERS MEETINGS). HON HAS BEEN ATTENDING THE COMMON-WEALTH FINANCE MINISTERS' MEETING PREPARATORY TO THE IMF/IBRD MEETING, IS GOING ON TO THE IMF/IBRD MEETING IN WASHINGTON, AND WILL NOT RETURN TO SINGAPORE FOR SEVERAL WEEKS.

3. IN RESPONSE TO MCMILLAN'S REQUEST, WE HAVE APPOINTMENT OCTOBER 5 (EARLIEST DATE WE COULD GET WITH THIS BUSY OFFICIAL)

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TO CALL ON NGIAM TONG DOW, PERMSEC FOR DEVELOPMENT, MINISTRY OF FINANCE, WHO SUPERVISES DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND IS MOST SENIOR AVAILABLE OFFICIAL WITH INTEREST IN AVON CASE. WE DOUBT THAT OUR APPROACH WILL HAVE MUCH EFFECT ON GOS DECISION, HOWEVER, SINCE IT APPARENTLY IS GOING TO BE MADE PERSONALLY BY MINISTER HON.

4. DEPARTMENT OF TRADE HAS, SO FAR AS WE ARE AWARE, NO LEGISLATION OR REGULATIONS ON WHICH TO BASE A REJECTION. IT DESCRIBED AVON CONFIDENTIALLY TO US AS THE "KIND OF ACTIVITY WE WOULD NOT WELCOME"; I.E., "A LARGE, AGGRESSIVE FOREIGN RETAIL FIRM THAT SELLS DOOR-TO-DOOR". EMBASSY CONSIDERS TRADE DEPARTMENT'S NEGATIVE RECOMMENDATION TO BE BASED ON SOMEWHAT SUBJECTIVE CRITERIA THAT HAVE NOT BEEN APPLIED STRICTLY IN PAST TO OTHER COMPANIES.

5. OCCURS TO US THAT MOST LOGICAL COURSE IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES MIGHT BE FOR SENIOR AVON OFFICIAL TO SEEK APPOINTMENT WITH HON SUI SEN IN WASHINGTON TO DISCUSS CASE PERSONALLY WITH HIM. ALTERNATIVELY, DEPARTMENT OFFICER MIGHT SEEK OPPORTUNITY TO RAISE MATTER WITH MINISTER IN WASHINGTON. IF DEPARTMENT AGREES THAT AVON APPROACH TO MINISTER WOULD BE APPROPRIATE, REQUEST DEPARTMENT CONTACT MCMILLAN DIRECTLY (TELEPHONE 212-593-4840) TO MAKE THAT SUGGESTION. IF DEPARTMENT BELIEVES APPROACH BY DEPTOFF WOULD BE PREFERABLE, REQUEST YOU INFORM MCMILLAN OF THIS.

6. WE HAVE REPLIED TO MCMILLAN'S CABLE TO US AS FOLLOWS:
"I AGREE WITH YOUR ASSESSMENT THAT DECISION ON AVON APPLICATION RESTS WITH MINISTER HON, WHO IS NOW IN WASHINGTON AS HEAD OF SINGAPORE DELEGATION TO WORLD BANK/IMF MEETINGS. IN VIEW OF HIS ABSENCE FROM SINGAPORE, WE ARE APPROACHING FINANCE MINISTRY AT HIGHEST APPROPRIATE LEVEL IN SUPPORT OF YOUR APPLICATION. WE WILL INFORM MR. SOUTHALL OF ANY RESULTS FROM THIS MEETING, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BUT WOULD NOT EXPECT A DECISION UNTIL MINISTER RETURNS TO SINGAPORE." HOLDRIDGE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 23-Sep-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770349-0025
Format: TEL
From: SINGAPORE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770927/aaaaaxbg.tel
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Litigation Code IDs:
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Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
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Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1151505
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AVON PRODUCTS INC. APPLICATION TO DO BUSINESS IN SINGAPORE
TAGS: BEXP, SN
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/f8eacc3e-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009